

**MINUTES  
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS  
PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
MASTER PLAN STUDY  
31555 W ELEVEN MILE ROAD  
FARMINGTON HILLS, MICHIGAN  
MARCH 21, 2024 6:00 P.M.**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Special Meeting was called to order by Chair Trafelet at 6:05pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present:           Aspinall, Brickner, Countegan (6:42pm), Grant, Mantey, Trafelet, Stimson, Ware

Commissioners Absent:           Varga

Others Present:                   Director of Planning and Community Development Kettler-Schmult, City Attorney Schultz, Planning Consultants Tangari and Upfal

Mayor Rich, City Council Members Bruce and Knol

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**MOTION by Stimson, support by Aspinall, to approve the agenda as published.**

**Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

**MASTER PLAN STUDY**

**A. Review Draft Master Plan**

Planning Consultant Tangari led the Commission through an overview of the 03/14/24 draft 2024 Master Plan, “The Next 50”, Document and Appendix. The Master Plan text reflected Planning Commission discussions as well as public input. The Master Plan opens with a brief history of Farmington Hills, which celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a City in 2023, and envisions the next 50 years – “The Next 50.”

There will be at least one more meeting regarding the draft Master Plan before the document is presented at a public hearing. Commissioners were asked to gather their thoughts about the document and the appendix, and come to the next meeting prepared to offer comments and feedback.

Comments made during the section by section overview included:

- Several clerical errors were pointed out and formatting changes suggested (such as expanding the chart on p. 29 so that the entire response text to the left of the bar graph can be read, and enlarging type related to certain graphs). On p. 153, Innovation Energy and Environmental Sustainability Committee (IEESC) is currently on sunset. Multicultural/Multiracial Community (MCMR) is currently not a City Board or Commission.
- P. 32, under Sustainability and Resiliency – the comment was made that a vast majority of businesses do not recycle because the separate cardboard bin takes up a separate parking space. Farmington Hills

has high parking requirements, so that for many businesses, each space counts. This is an example of the interrelatedness of issues.

- P. 49 addressed parking requirements. Could the Master Plan include a statement that the City does not want to replace parking requirements with drive-through restaurants?
- Regarding Planned Unit Developments (p. 50), could qualification criteria more precisely address public benefits? (The term “public benefit” does not appear in the zoning ordinance.)
- The Commission should continue to think about special planning areas, and how planned flexibility including vertical development and mixed uses can create lively spaces. How does this fit into the economic development/sustainability picture?
- Could staff provide the balance from tax increment revenue capture that is in the Grand River Corridor Improvement fund?
- The portion of Grand River Corridor that is not part of the TIF (tax increment financing) area could be its own study area.
- Include a map showing just the special residential planning areas. Perhaps group those areas in terms of common goals and recommendations.
- Regarding the discussion of flex residential/office spaces on p. 76, this is another area where less parking might be needed.
- Regarding the Boys & Girls Republic and Inkster/9 Mile special planning area (p. 80), consider this hard to develop area that is also a “nature gem” as a potential city park.
- Regarding Orchard Lake Road north of 11 Mile Road (p. 86) being considered for flex residential/office space, was this designation appropriate? The west side of Orchard Lake Road is all single family residential, and on the east side there is a new condo development. Any office parking would likely have to be to the rear, where there is more residential development. This is not a transition area, and office use might not be appropriate.
- Utilize pop up, temporary and mobile uses (p. 87) in non-residential special planning areas, in order to generate energy and activity in those spaces without having to put shovels in the ground.
- Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are addressed in the Housing Plan.
- Regarding Section 07 – Transportation Plan, the text could acknowledge the need for better and more frequent bus service. There is not a single bus route that runs through the City more than once an hour.
- Section on complete streets (pp. 97-99) offers benefits related to providing transportation alternatives. The non-motorized plan (p. 100) points out pathways that currently exist. However, if the City approves non-motorized pathway improvements, will they be maintained and be ADA compliant in the winter? The feasibility of winter maintenance is also discussed on p. 108.
- P. 107 provides a map showing the location of bicycle crashes 2018-2022. Locations of repeated crashes should be evaluated to see if safety could be increased through maintenance and/or pathway re-location.
- Grassy medians could include bike paths down their center, including the Grand River median and perhaps the Northwestern medians. Bicycle paths in the medians are safer than those on the roadsides, and they cross fewer roads/access drives.
- Cars drive in and park in the bike lanes on 13 Mile in front of North Farmington High School; the bike lanes have increased congestion and made travel less safe for bicyclists.
- When the Master Plan addresses “Safe Roads to Schools,” a map of school locations should be provided. The City should take the lead in providing a safe route for students to walk and bike to school.
- Creating new sidewalks in established subdivisions can be problematic, as streets were developed with ditching, and it is very expensive to construct sidewalks where that is the case.

- Non-motorized pathways should be prioritized in the Capital Improvements Plan. The new Targeted Improvements Map can help inform CIP discussions.
- Regarding Section 08 – Housing. The narrative could include a reference to the lack of incentives (such as tax deductions) for new home buyers, so that renting is seen as the better alternative. Attainable housing is discussed (pp. 115-177) in this section, as are accessory dwelling units (p. 119).
- Regarding Section 09 - Arts and Placemaking, information should be given relative to local high school and college arts events, including music events. P. 149 gives examples of percent for art ordinances.
- Photographic examples should give the location of the buildings and why the photographs are included. Some local examples should be included.
- Section on health and wellness should reference the YMCA.
- Future discussion should address assumptions about future square footage needed for retail and office space.
- Any data provided should be referenced as to year and source.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Ware suggested that the next Master Plan review meeting allow plenty of time for discussion.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Ware, support by Stimson, to adjourn the Special Meeting at 7:25pm.**

**Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristen Aspinall  
Planning Commission Secretary

/cem